DR. JAYANTA RONGPI : The people of Assam want to know as to how the army operations can be carried out on their own when the State Governments, who is primarily responsible for law and order, is not aware of it or the Union Government is not aware of it. Therefore, I request that the Union Government should come out openly and make a statement in this regard. I hope they will make a statement at the earliest.

SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI (Howrah) : Sir, I am not raising any controversial issue in the House. I would only like to submit that today is the last day of the Session. I read in the newspapers that the Prime Minister has agreed to have a Secretarial level meeting with Pakistan. At the backdrop of successful completion of elections in Jammu and Kashmir, I request that, through you, the entire House must express our total solidarity and support to the people of Jammu and Kashmir who have expressed their profound faith in the Constitution of India ignoring threat of international terrorist gangs. At the backdrop of this if, through you or through the Prime Minister, the solidarity of this House is expressed it will give a great solace to the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

[Translation]

SHRI TARIQ ANWAR (Katihar) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, through you, I would like to draw attention of the Central Government towards my Lok Sabha Constituency, Katihar. There are two jute mills in Katihar in which a large number of labourers are engaged. But for the last many years, Katihar jute mill is lying closed which has affected 3000 families and they are on the verge of starvation I would like to make my humble submission to the hon. Prime Minister that necessary action may be taken at the earliest for reopening of these mills. It will not only benefit the labourers engaged in it but also the farmers of Kosi Circle who produce jute and whose livelihood depends upon these mills.

12.04 hrs.

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

[Translation]

Leader of Opposition in Parliament (Allowances, Medical and other Facilities Amendment Rules, 1996.

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS AND MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to lay on the Table of the House a copy of the Leaders of Opposition in Parliament (Allowances, Medical and other Facilities) Amendment Rules, 1996 (Hindi and English Versions) published in Notification No. G.S.R. 211 (E) in Gazette of India dated 15th May, 1996, under sub-section(3) of Section 10 of the Salary and Allowances of Leaders of Opposition in Parliament Act, 1977.

[Placed in Library. See No LT 18/96]

12.05 hrs.

MATTERS UNDER RULE 377

(i) Need for early functioning of Airstrip at Paliakalan, Lakhimpur Kheri, U.P.

[Translation]

DR. G.L. KANAUJIA (Kheri) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, my Parliamentary Constituency, Lakhimpur Kheri is contiguous to Nepal border. Construction of an airstrip at Paliakalan had been completed about one year ago. The local villagers would start encroachment on the land of this airstrip, if it is not made functional soon. Rainy season is likely to start and it is a flood prone area. At that time, it would be difficult for the local administration to stop the encroachment. It is an important airstrip which is situated between Kathmandu and Bareilly and is about 500 k.m. away from Nepal border. I, therefore, request the Government to make this airstrip functional at the earliest.

(ii) Need to provide Financial Assistance to Government of Madhya Pradesh to solve acute drinking water problem in the State.

DR. SATYANARAYAN JATIA (Ujjain) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, Madhya Pradesh is facing acute shortage of drinking water, I request the Central Government to issue necessary instructions for providing assistane and making arrangement for supply of drinking water in the State.

(iii) Need to run a train between Delhi and Ajmer on newly laid broad gauge line.

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT (Ajmer) : Mr Speaker, Sir, the newly laid broad gauge line between Delhi and Ajmer was inaguarated by the then Railway Minister on 5th June 1995 More than one year has elapsed but no train has been introduced on this broad gauge line which was constructed by spending crores of rupees. It has resulted in resentment among the lakhs of people of Ajmer. In spite of several requests made by various political parties, representatives of people and organaisations no train has been introduced so far between Delhi and Ajmer for the benefit of common people.

I request the Government of India that keeping in view the international importance of Ajmer, a new train should be introduced immediately on Ajmer-Jaipur-Alwar-Delhi broad gauge line, so that common people could be benefitted by it. This train will prove beneficial for Railways as well as the passengers from lower and middle classes.

(iv) Need to provide compensation to the victims of Rail Tragedy at Cheppad in Kerala on 14 May, 1996.

[English]

SHRI V.M. SUDHEERAN (Alleppey) : Sir, a serious situation prevails due to rail-bus tragedy that occurred at Cheppad near Haripad in my constituency Alapuzha, Kerala on May 14, 1996 resulting in the death of 36 persons and serious injuries to eight others.

The Cheppad tragedy is one of the worst in recent times People of this area have been clamouring for a manned-gate at this railway level crossing.

There are 58 unmanned level crossings in this coastal railway line between Ernakulam and Kayamkulam. The majority of these level crossings are highly dangerous spots and real death traps. The local people have been pointing out to the dangerous nature of these level crossings where an accident of serious dimension could occur any time. But the railway authorities seem to be indifferent to this just demand of the local people.

I urge upon the hon. Minister of Railways to sanction at least one lakh rupees each to the dependants of those died and reasonable amount of relief to the injured. I also request the Government to take immediate steps to instal manned gates at all the vulnerable and dangerous level crossings in this thickly populated area.

I make use of this occasion to express my sincere thanks to the hon. Prime Minister for sanctioning Rs. 48,000/- each to the families of the deceased persons from the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund. Though it is a considerable relief, the Railways should also fulfil their obligation considering the poor condition of the affected families.

(v) Need to restore eight hour a day duty for workers of National Jute Mill at Howrah, West Bengal.

SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI (Howrah) : Sir, the largest public sector Jute mill in India is the National Jute Mill at Howrah within Sankrail Police Station. In the last week, the workers' legitimate right to work for eight hours has been reduced to five hours to deprive them of their due wages.

I request the Central Government to immediately intervene and restore eight hours duty of the workers without any further delay. Export initiative and better marketing policy of the jute goods should be looked into from a fresh angle.

(vi) Need to Re-introduce local telephone facility at Pupri and Sitamarhi telephone exchanges, Bihar.

[Translation]

SHRI NAWAL KISHORE RAI (Sitamarhi) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, Pupri division is under Sitamarhi district of Bihar. Its headquarters is also in Pupri itself. There was local telephone diallilng facility in Pupri and Sitamarhi Telephone Exchanges upto January 1996, which had benefited the local people. But since February 1996, this local telephone dialling facility has been withdrawn and Pupri and Sitamarhi have been linked with STD lines. It has resulted in resentment among the people. The distance between Sitamarhi and Pupri is just 25 kms. All other districts of the state have local telephone dialling facility. Therefore, the facility of local telephone for the benefit of common people at Pupri and Sitamarhi Telephone Exchanges should be restored. Sonbarsa, Parihar, Sursand, Bajpatti and Runnisaidpur sub-divisions fall under Sitamarhi district. All the sub division telephone exchanges have single line service with Sitamarhi. As a result, people face difficulty in contacting on telephones. It is, therefore, requested that 10 Channel U.S.F. system may also be installed at the earliest in all the sub-divisional exchanges of Sitamarhi in the public interest.

(vii) Need for early payment of dues to sugarcane growers in Dumariaganj, U.P.

SHRI BRIJ BHUSHAN TIWARI (Dumariaganj) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, sugarcane growers in my parliamentary constituency, Dumariaganj are in a deplorable condition. In 1995-96 Tulsipur sugarmill and Khalilabad sugarmill owed Rs. 29 lakh and Rs. 20 lakh respectively to the Badhti Sugarcane Cooperative Society of farmers and so far it has not received even a single instalment towards payment of farerms' dues. Moreover, as against an offer for supply of one lakh and six thousand quintal of sugarcane, only 39,000 quintal sugarcane has been purchased. Rest of the sugarcane had to be burnt, in the fields. The farmers are thus, suffering both ways. The farmers of Basti districts are also facing the same problem.

I, therefore, request the Government to make arrangement for payment of dues of farmers at the earliest.